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HEMI-SYNC® APPLICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY AND MUSIC THERAPY IN A REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

by Suzanne E. Jonas, Ed.D.

Dr. Jonas is engaged in counseling psychology/creative therapies. She currently teaches at the University of Massachusetts, trains hospital staff in the use of music and Hemi-Sync with patients, and is a psychologist/music therapist in a practice focused on clients with physical “dis-ease.” She has conducted research in hospitals demonstrating both music and Hemi-Sync effectiveness with surgery patients.

Placing a transparency of the human brain on the overhead projector, Dr. Jonas pointed out that in dealing with stroke patients, one has to realize each stroke affects a different part of the brain—making each stroke unique. Some stroke patients can write, but not read; some can comprehend, but not speak; others have varying degrees of paralysis in different parts of the body, etc. Therefore, she had no blanket answers, no definitive way for dealing with the rehabilitation of stroke patients, yet she has found varying combinations of music and Hemi-Sync to be very effective tools.

Dr. Jonas explained that the music therapy she employs is a “passive” style (where the patient listens to music) versus an “active” style (where the patient makes music). The Weldon Center for Rehabilitation at Mercy Hospital in Springfield, Mass., where she is employed, serves the western Massachusetts and southern Vermont area and is a 90-bed facility (usually about half-full) that also serves outpatients. Generally her clients are 50-92 years old, Roman Catholic, conservative, moralistic, literal, and have neglected their bodies.

When a patient is referred to her, the extent of the information she is usually given is that the patient has suffered a right CVA (Cardio Vascular Accident) or a left CVA stroke. The patient is told only that she is a psychologist/music therapist, to which the patient often responds, “But I’m not crazy!” Her first bridge to her patients is usually music. Asking patients what music they like and then playing it for them is a good way of building rapport, she noted. Music also helps relax them, and begins immediately to help them to deal with a leading cause of stroke—hypertension.

A good rule of thumb in initial music selections, according to Dr. Jonas, is music the patient listened to between the ages of 18 and 30. After making that connection, it’s fairly easy to introduce them to Hemi-Sync tapes for general healing and sometimes specific therapy.

After she reviewed several case studies, Dr. Jonas discussed some general points based on her experience with music and Hemi-Sync as healing tools. She said *Energy Walk* is a tape

that most patients like and *Energy Bar Tool* (Threshold #5), containing techniques for scanning and restoring the physical body, has been used. She said for those patients who don't like Bob Monroe's voice and/or resist "being hypnotized," *Midsummer Night* can be helpful (she noted that was the only *METAMUSIC*® selection to which she has received a positive response). Baroque music is some of the best to use for therapy because of its characteristic steady dynamics or beat (60 beats per minute), which has been demonstrated to relax and create a hemispheric synchrony. She uses other music which includes the general characteristics of: heartbeat tempo (or somewhat slower), acoustical versus electric instruments, and an upbeat ending. Examples she cited were *Clouds* from Debussy's *Three Nocturnes*, the second movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony, and the ancient Irish music performed by Enya. She added that music with a definite beat is useful in physical therapy because it helps entrain the muscles. For that purpose, she said it would be useful to have a Hemi-Sync tape designed to produce a "body awake, mind asleep" state.

Dr. Jonas stated that, largely as a result of her work, Mercy Hospital is planning to wire the entire facility for sound, beginning with the cardiac and intensive care units. And while the rehab center now has twelve Walkman-style tape players, she said the goal is to have one for every patient.

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